



Department of Justice

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CHARLOTTE FBI CHIEF DIVISION COUNSEL CHARGED WITH MAKING FALSE STATEMENT

____ WASHINGTON, D.C. – Assistant Attorney General Christopher A. Wray announced today that a federal grand jury sitting in the Western District of North Carolina in Charlotte, North Carolina, returned a one-count indictment charging Erik B. Blowers with making a false statement in a matter within the jurisdiction of the executive branch of the United States, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001(a)(2). Blowers is a Special Agent and Chief Division Counsel for the Charlotte Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

The indictment alleges that Blowers accepted benefits worth thousands of dollars from David Simonini, a former cooperating witness for the FBI under Blowers' supervision. According to the indictment, the FBI squad that Blowers was then charged with supervising was conducting a preliminary investigation of bank fraud and money laundering allegations against Simonini. The indictment alleges that specifically, in April and August 2000, Blowers traveled to Las Vegas, Nevada with Simonini, at Simonini's invitation. Simonini was responsible for all of the expenses associated with Blowers's trips to Las Vegas, and Blowers allegedly did not pay Simonini for those costs. Blowers was required by the Ethics in Government Act to report his receipt of those benefits on an Executive Branch Confidential Financial Disclosure Report.

On or about Oct. 31, 2000, Erik Blowers filed his Confidential Financial Disclosure Report, as required by the Ethics in Government Act. In response to the requirement that he report gifts and travel reimbursements received from one source totaling more than \$260, and knowing that he had received gifts and travel reimbursements in April 2000 and August 2000 from David Simonini that he was required to report, the indictment alleges that Blowers falsely checked the box marked "None," in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001(a)(2). A false statement in violation of that section is punishable by imprisonment for up to five years, a fine of up to \$250,000, or both.

The case is being prosecuted in the United States District Court for the Western District of North Carolina in the Charlotte Division by Senior Counsel William J. Corcoran and Trial Attorney Daniel A. Petalas of the Public Integrity Section, headed by Noel L. Hillman, Chief. The case was investigated by the United States Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General.

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